

Title: Interview with Susie Ruddy

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Interviewer(s): Mia Butta and Sam Gundlach

Interviewee: Susie Ruddy

Introduction: Susie Ruddy talks about her experiences living in Crisfield for nearly her entire life, from restaurants, work life, home flooding and town flooding, to her experience with the local, state and US government involvement in dealing with the flooding, with the positives and negatives, especially after Hurricane Sandy.

[Transcription begins]

Mia Butta (Butta): So, my name is Mia.

Sam Gundlach (Gundlach): My name is Sam.

Butta: And we're with Susie here at the NABB Center, or at the library, the-

Gundlach: Salisbury University Library.

Butta: Salisbury University Library, and it's April 1st, 2025. So, we're going to start off with just some basic background questions. So how long have you lived in the Crisfield area?

Susie Ruddy (Ruddy): All my life.

Butta: So, what was it like and why did you choose Crisfield?

Ruddy: Well, my grandparents were from Crisfield and their parents were from Crisfield, and my mom was from Crisfield, so. I've lived in Crisfield all but about three years. I lived in Glen Burnie.

Butta: So, you were born in Crisfield? And what keeps you in Crisfield?

Ruddy: There's no other place like Crisfield, really.

Gundlach: When you say there's no other place like Crisfield, what do you mean?

Ruddy: It's a town that always comes together for everything. Even if they don't like you, if something happens, they're going to be there for you, and that is, I've witnessed it a lot of times. They are very, we're very close knit, and I did, I forgot this, I lived in Salisbury when I was married for three years. They are not Crisfielders, seriously. It's a place like no other, you just have to live there to witness it. Like, I was a beautician for 50-some years and my customers always brought me like seafood, crab meat, soft crabs, vegetables all the time. They're just so thoughtful and kind. I lived in Salisbury. My sister-in-law and her husband were farmers. Watermelon, anything you wanted, vegetable-wise, not once did she ever offer me a watermelon. And I couldn't, you know that I couldn't fathom that because my customers would come from Crisfield and bring me all this stuff, yet the family that I was in didn't even offer me a watermelon. And they had fields rotting, you know, of watermelon. I told my husband, I said, "I've never known people like this." They'd be telling everybody, "Go get the watermelon, you know, so they won't rot."

Butta: So, you mentioned that you were a beautician in Crisfield. Did you have any other job there before coming to Salisbury and working here?

Ruddy: I've had lots of jobs, four jobs at one time. I worked up here in a beauty salon. I worked in Crisfield. I had my own shop. Let's see, I waitressed. I've done everything. I clean the shop in-where I worked. Yeah, I've done a little bit of everything.

Butta: So, do you have any children?

Ruddy: No.

Butta: No children.

Ruddy: No, no children. I really wanted children, but it just didn't happen.

Butta: So, moving on, what is or are some of your most cherished memories of Crisfield?

Ruddy: The people. I love the people. I'll tell you this little tidbit, I had to have a heart catheterization a couple months ago and so I put it on Facebook because I was petrified. I said, "Please put me on your prayer list at church, please pray for me because I'm scared to death." I had 320-some comments saying they would pray for me, that's the kind of people they are. Even people I didn't hardly know. So, when I went for my cath, the funny part is the two girls that were with me, the nurses, they were from Crisfield. So, I told them, I said, "I'm good, I'm good, I had 320 prayers on Facebook. And now I got two Crisfielders, one on each side of me, I am good." And I made out like a champ, didn't have a bit of problem.

Butta: So, it's easy to make a lot of connections in Crisfield, even if you haven't known them for a long time, you would say? Or do you have a lot of lifelong friends that you've made since being there, going to school there all your life?

Ruddy: Yes. And that's another thing, everybody knows everybody because it's such a small community.

Gundlach: So, you- you briefly touched on- on the religion aspect of Crisfield with the prayers and everything. How have you seen religion change in and around Crisfield in your whole life?

Ruddy: It's changed dramatically, for sure, but we have lots of churches, even though it's a very small town. We have a lot of churches. They always say we have plenty of churches and plenty of banks.

Gundlach: How do you entertain yourself when you're in Crisfield?

Ruddy: I'm old now, so I watch TV and hold my cat.

Gundlach: How did you entertain yourself in the past? Has there been a big change in like how people go about entertainment? How people do like on their days off, like the fun activities?

Ruddy: I don't. When I was younger, you know, I went out a lot, went to- loved to dance, so you know, parties and things like that, but when you get older, it all stops. You don't have the energy to do any of that anymore.

Butta: There's a lot of, I guess, more tourist-centered events in the summer, like the Crab Derby, I think is what it's called. So, did you attend those growing up and have you seen a change in those activities now?

Ruddy: Yes, it's not as big as it used to be. We used to have like 5,000 people come to Crisfield for the Crab Derby, we call it. But it's dwindling.

Butta: And when was the last time you think that you attended one of these Crab Derbies?

Ruddy: Probably ten, ten or twelve years. [2013-2015 was last time she went to Crab Derby.]

Butta: So, it's probably declined more since then, you think?

Ruddy: Yeah, I think so. I used to always go to the parade, because I love parades, but it's too much. It's too hot, you know, sit out in the sun. I haven't been in the last few years, I miss it. One thing about the Crab Derby is you see people that you don't see any other time, like people that I went to school with, they come home for Crab Derby. And so, you run into a lot of people that, you know, you were close with when you were younger. And that's nice, I love that.

Butta: So, moving on, what role does the waterfront or the Chesapeake Bay play in recreation and social life for the community?

Ruddy: The water is the main thing, boating, crabbing, fishing. It's, um, the water's a big deal, and from where I live, I don't live on the water, but I can actually see the water from my porch. I love that. It's calming. And then at the end of my street is the water. So, I can see that as well. But the rise of the water is not good.

Gundlach: How has the- the rising water impacted the recreation aspect in Crisfield, like the water recreation and stuff?

Ruddy: I don't know that it has impacted that, but um, I think people are thinking twice about moving there now. Maybe they are, I don't know. We still get a lot of people from the cities that want to come there because it's quiet. And, you know, it's a tight community, but I think it might deter people from coming there, like our dean here. She said she looked in Crisfield for homes, but she didn't want to have to worry with the tide. And I thought, "Just ask me, I can tell you about the tide now," because when I moved in my house which was 1988, I do know that. We didn't have the tides we have now. I mean, I found pictures. This is my old house, but my grass was so green and thick. I don't have green grass anymore. It all looks like it's dead, you know, it's brown. Even right now, where everything's starting to bloom, my- I don't have any grass.

Butta: And you don't live right on the coastline either, you're kind of a little bit more inland?

Ruddy: A little bit, yeah. The road I live on goes to the water at the end, and then if you turn right there's an American Legion at the end, that's all surrounded by the water. So, there's water, like I said, I can see it from my house and at the end of the road. That's as close as all I'll ever get, but I'm going to tell you, I get terrible tides. And like I said, it's worse now. When I moved there, we might have had some tide, but nothing like we have now.

Butta: When you say rising tides, is this something that you see, like how often do you see it, rising to the extent that you are talking about?

Ruddy: Well, if we have, we call it a Nor'easter, that always brings in the tide and Sandy, which was- was 2012.

Gundlach: Yes.

Ruddy: I should remember that. I wasn't at home because it was, you know, going to be a hurricane. I went and stayed with a friend who never got tide ever where she lives. And she got tide. Come rushing in, it looked like Ocean City. And I was panicking, because I think, "If she's getting this tide, what is my house getting?" And I mean, little trikes, kids' trikes and all that kind of stuff were just floating by like nothing. She was walking the floor, and I said, "Uh-huh. See what I've been dealing with my whole life?" But I've never seen any tides like that one. I don't want to see any again either. And that's the tide that came in my house and came up the wall. And how I know this, because I didn't get there for two days, it was so bad. I had a line all

around my walls with, like, seaweed and dirt, you know, it was just a line all the way. I said, "Oh my gosh," and two or three of my girlfriends went with me. We had hip boots even two days later to get into my house.

Gundlach: So, after that storm, did you have your house raised? Cause I assume that that damage had to be repaired. Did you get it raised when that was being repaired?

Ruddy: They actually tore my house down. They condemned it, the city.

Gundlach: That's how bad it was, they had to condemn it, wow.

Ruddy: Oh, I did a little bit of everything. I cried. I said, "I'm going to get it fixed!" and the county, not county, city manager said, "No. Under your house, it's probably been wet a million times. That's mold. No, I'm condemning it. You can't stay here." So I had to go stay with a friend for five or six weeks. You don't want to hear about that. But anyway, then another friend of mine called me after five or six weeks and said, "I have a place for you to live," and I said, "Where?" and he said, "My trailer." He had a trailer before he got a home. And he says, "It's empty. There's nobody in it. I'll go there and help you clean it." And he did, scrubbed walls, and it wasn't bad. It was a nice trailer, wasn't a little dinky trailer, it's nice. Two bedrooms, two bathrooms. So, I made out, I just tell you a little story, I made chili after I moved in. Well, I only took like two plates, two cups, two whatever, saucers. I didn't take any bowls. So, I invited three of my friends around for chili, and I didn't have any bowls. So, one of my friends said, "I'll bring the bowls. Don't go back home for them," because you think, well, you're not going to be there that long. Why take much? I was there a year and a half. That's what it took them to build my house, but they're volunteers, you know, and they're Mennonites. And they built probably 9, 10, maybe 12 houses after Sandy. I don't know for sure how many, but I know they built right many. And mine was one of them, so they're working on all of them at the same time, so that's why it took so long. Now, there was a girl across from me last summer that got one, because her house had flooded. But she didn't put in for it right away. Soon as they started talking about it, I went. And so, she got one built. Last summer, three months, she was in her house. And I was a year and a half. But there's nothing you can do. You're at their mercy, you know, they're volunteers, and thank the Lord for volunteers, because I wouldn't have a place to live.

Gundlach: So, you said you had to file for that. Was that through like the state government or how did you file for that?

Ruddy: Well, I- I applied to the state, which that was a different situation, you. If you filed with the state and if you passed, whatever, then they would build you a home, but then if you wanted to sell it, it would go back to them. It wouldn't really be yours. So, the Mennonites, they build it for you, and they built it with funds from churches like Lutheran. All aspects of religion donates this money. I didn't realize that, but it was Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, any kind you can think of. They donated all this money and that's how they build these houses. Plus, you give

them what insurance you get. Now the bad part of all this, I got a new house, that was a good part, but I had borrowed all this money on my old house to get things fixed. I got all new windows, a new roof, new siding, all this. I'm paying for that now, till doomsday. So that's the bad part, because if the insurance paid your house off, this would be a free house, and, but it isn't. I pay a payment every month on my old house that's in a dumpster. So that's the bad part of that, but I'm just, I feel so thankful that I got a house.

Butta: So, did that funding was from the churches, right, in the religious communities? Are those based, were they all based in Crisfield or?

Ruddy: Oh no, none of them were, really. They were from all over. All over. No, I don't think any of them probably were from Crisfield.

Butta: And the volunteers that you talked about, were they mostly Crisfield residents?

Ruddy: No, they were Mennonites. It's called Maryland Disaster Services. And it's a totally voluntary group that come from mostly Pennsylvania. And what a nice group of people. I can't say enough about them. They were so kind.

Butta: And do you know if they're still active, as that group is active as volunteers in Crisfield today?

Ruddy: They're back again. I mean, they stayed gone for a little while, but they're back building houses again. Because like I said, the girl across from me, she got one last year. So, they've probably been there a couple years now. They're back. And I don't know where they're building, other, I don't know where they're building now. But yeah, when I got my new house, I had to go through a whole process to get this new house put up, but that's another, it was so many ordeals that you had to go through. It was, and thank the good Lord, I wasn't quite this old then, because a really old person couldn't do this. I had papers to fill out every month, every month from FEMA. And I'll tell you, it gets nerve plucking to do that. One time the lady would call me, "You haven't turned your papers in." I said, "No wonder, I've been doing this every month since this happened." I told her she knew everything about me there was to know. I won't tell you what I said, but I told her, "Why do I have to do this every month? It doesn't change from month to month. You know, I'm still living in the same trailer. I'm still working the same place. Nothing has changed." She says, "Well you have to do it." And I still have to have flood insurance, as long as I have a mortgage. And I just got the bill for that. Makes me so mad. I don't know.

Butta: So, when they rebuilt your home, how- how much did they raise it?

Ruddy: I did know, but I don't now. Just say if my house gets flooded now, Crisfield will be gone.

Butta: So, you haven't experienced any major home flooding since it's been rebuilt?

Ruddy: Oh, it floods, but not in my house. It's- it's built up enough, like I said, if it comes in my house now, Crisfield's gonna be gone. Now somewhere, I probably got pictures I can show you of that. I take pictures because you think, "My boss is not going to believe me when I say I can't get out." So, I take pictures, and send her. That's my side yard. That's not the front.

Butta: Oh my.

Gundlach: Yeah, that's a lot of water.

Ruddy: Now this is my front yard. And this is the road. It's underwater.

Gundlach: It's completely covered.

Ruddy: And that's why I can't get out.

Gundlach: You can't drive anywhere with that condition.

Ruddy: And that's my lane right here where that fence is. That's where I put my, well, it used to be where I put my car. It's a circular drive now. They made it that way. I wish I hadn't done that, but, and see, it's across the road. That's the road! It covers the whole road, so I can't get out.

Butta: So, does that type of flooding happen during a severe, a more severe storm?

Ruddy: No, this isn't.

Gundlach: That's just a regular day.

Ruddy: It's just a high tide. Like I said, I wasn't home during Sandy. See, this is the road. It's like a crossway there and it comes onto my road. This is my yard, and there's my car down the road. I have to take my car down there cause I don't want my car to get ruined. There's two or three people in my area that lost their cars but they left them home. Wake up, you can't leave your car home in this. I've got some even better ones than that. No, it's just like the one I showed you. That's my backyard. There's my clothesline. But it normally comes up all the way. Comes up to the house. I don't think I've- oh, there's my kitty. I don't think I got any [pauses]. Now this was Christmas, it says October 29th, might have been before Christmas, but I had some, not this past Christmas, but the one before. It was up to my bottom step, and it was scaring me because it hasn't been that high since Sandy. Now that's my house, you can see, it's just a piece of it, but it doesn't look like it's up very high, but it is. [Christmas 2023]

Butta: So, you experience these high tides pretty often. How would you say that affects your daily life and daily routines?

Ruddy: I still panic every time it gets high like that, its [pauses]. And you know you can't get out. You're stuck home, and you think, "Yeah, this is the road in front of my house."

Gundlach: How does that impact your ability to like, acquire food?

Ruddy: You can't get out. Tough. But, um, this was Christmas. I remember standing on my stoop, looking down. It's right up to my bottom step. And I was thinking, "Don't you dare come up another inch." I sent these to my boss, saying, "I'm marooned!"

Butta: I see you often have to, or you have to take off work during these times when it, the tide rises.

Ruddy: Until it goes down, yeah. I found a little secret though, like, where you come into my, um, road is very low. So, it always rises down there and comes across the road up about halfway my house. So, when I went home one time, I couldn't get in my road at all. And the road in front of me floods, the whole road, and then the one that goes across from me floods about halfway. So, I thought, "I can't get home, what am I going to do?" so I went, there's another way. We have a new library, and there's a road that goes behind that, that actually comes out to my road. And so I went that way, now it was tide, it was across the road, but it wasn't very deep. And I didn't mind going through that, like, the other end of my road is deep, because it kind of goes down. I don't want to take my car through that and ruin my car. So I went that way. It was coming across the road, you know, fast. The tide was coming in. But I got through it and got home. Or, well, I didn't go home. I parked it down the road because that road goes up. So, I put my car down there every time the tide's coming up and have to walk home. I've walked through water up to my knees to get home.

Butta: Aside from moving your car, do you do anything else to prepare for the flooding?

Ruddy: There's nothing you can do. Sit home and watch it. Not a thing you can do, because actually the 90% of the town floods. I mean, you can't get down the highway if you've ever been to Crisfield. It goes all the way to the end, goes back. All that's flooded. Can't get near that. Can't get to the condos, I don't know how they get home [pauses]. All downtown floods. It's bad when it's like that. They keep saying they're gonna do something about it, but I can't imagine what. I mean, Crisfield was actually built on oyster shells, the whole town. What are they going to do when these tides rise like that? They keep talking about it and they dig ditches out. They dug, they didn't dig my ditches in the front, but beside my property, they dug them and then back in the marsh. I thought maybe that will help. No, it didn't.

Gundlach: So, you- you talked about Sandy being super impactful. Are there any other storms that you remember super-vividly being like, super-impactful, similar to Sandy?

Ruddy: Sandy's the one that will stay in my mind forever because it was a bad time, you know, in my life when your house is ruined, half the stuff inside is ruined. I had a cat that I had to leave home in it because my friend had a cat so that I went and stayed with, so she would not let me bring my cat. So, it wasn't a very good time. I stayed there five weeks, and I'd get up three

o'clock in the morning because I couldn't sleep and I'd go home and hold my cat for an hour or so, then I'd get ready for work at home with all that mold. I had a great big entertainment center that went across one wall. I'm sure it wasn't real wood. It was like fiberboard or something, the water evidently got in that. It was all this furry stuff all along the bottom of that. I had to get a friend of mine's son came and cut it up in pieces with a saw and get it out of there because it was moldy. I had just put new carpet in my living room. You squished. So, I got somebody to take that up because I thought I was going to fix it, fix the floors. I had somebody lined up to fix the floors. It's a very trying experience, I can't, there's no words that I can explain when you come home and your house is ruined.

Gundlach: So, do you feel that- that climate change is something that people in Crisfield actively discuss and plan for?

Ruddy: No. I think they might hit on it a little bit, but doing anything about it, no, I don't. Because like I said, I've been in this, that piece of property since 1988 and there's not been anything done since I've been there. The only thing they sold property down from me. And they built, like, where the condos are, they're right at the end, they built them, and then this company is from Salisbury, Messick, I think. They were going to have like a marina, a restaurant. They had big plans for all that. And they've built up, of course, the part where the condos are and the part adjoining me. So, they're up and I'm in the valley. So that's why I get a lot of water. I would get it probably anyway, but that property's up high. Whoever, I didn't think about that. I just knew they're developing it, and I was glad. I thought that would make my property go up. Of course, mine's waterfront property so. But you can't do anything about progress. But the condos didn't sell like they thought. And so, it's no marina, no restaurant. So, whatever.

Butta: Do you have any idea as to why they don't, they're not actively planning right now, and the community isn't having a large discussion about climate change and the issue that you guys are facing?

Ruddy: They probably do have conversations, like City Hall, like the mayor and, you know, different ones. They probably do have conversations about it. They just don't, I can't see any action taken. And maybe there is some being taken, but I've not seen any.

Gundlach: So, have you participated in any community events surrounding the issue of flooding? Have there been like ones that you were aware of and couldn't participate in?

Ruddy: I haven't participated in anything because I work, you know, five days a week, so I don't get to do that. They had a meeting one time about streetlights, and I wanted to go to that. I didn't make it. But I sent a letter, I went to school with the mayor at that time, I sent him a letter and asked him would he read it, because I needed a streetlight. Didn't have to be right near my house, could be down a little, I didn't care. One side of my house is very dark, the one going towards the water. There's a light down where the cars all go to the boats. They've got a streetlight. But do

you know, he talked to all of them about it. And they all told him they were going to vote for it because they could see where I was, it was dark for me and I'm by myself. So anyway, at the meeting. They didn't vote for it. And he was really upset. He told me, he said, "They promised me they were gonna vote for you." I said, "Yeah, I saw one of them," one of the commissioners or whatever they are, and she told me she said, "I went by your house, it is pitch dark. You do need a streetlight." She voted against it. So, I don't have a streetlight. And then some of them got a little aggravated because I didn't show up. And, you know, the mayor read it, and he said, "You know, I went to school with her, I know her. She knew I would present it to you. She couldn't be here, she works." You know, they didn't care.

Butta: Since we're on the topic of government, I'm just going to skip to this, but then we can go back. So, do you have any opinions on how the city, county, or state has handled the flooding issues?

Ruddy: Do I have any what?

Butta: Opinions.

Ruddy: Well, I guess I can have all the opinions I want. There just doesn't seem to be any action where it's concerned. And basically, I don't know what they can do. You know, we're surrounded by water. It's a town on the water. How are they going to stop it? But I do know, like I said, when I moved there, it wasn't near as bad as it is now. It has gotten worse over the years, and I can't remember who I was talking to, but somebody from Crisfield, we said the same thing. This wasn't like this years ago, but then I see pictures of Hurricane Hazel, which I was young then, and the streets were flooded, but that was probably the only time. I don't ever remember seeing, I didn't remember seeing that, but I was younger, so I wasn't interested, I'm sure. But it shows the downtown part all flooded, you know, cars going through the water. So, I guess, but I don't think we had tides like we do now. I don't, oh, I know I don't because like I said, I found these pictures and my grass was so green like velvet.

Butta: Have you ever seen any construction that could have been related to like flood resilience infrastructure like raising roadways or building barriers or anything?

Ruddy: No. Not to say that they haven't done something, but I've not seen it. No, and I'm sure I would have heard about it.

Gundlach: Do you feel that your voice and the voice of the other community members is being heard by the local government?

Ruddy: No.

Gundlach: Is there like a- a way that they could go about getting those opinions and hearing those voices better?

Ruddy: I'm sure there are ways, but, you know, this has been going on for years and years and years. They need to do something, whatever that is. I don't know personally what they would do. Like I said, how do you stop the water from coming in? There's just no way, unless they build the whole town up, and most of the houses they're building now they do, you know it's- it's above what the regular standards were I know with mine. That was another whole rigmarole. Probably never heard that word. But it was. I had to go through fifty million papers and talking to this woman from wherever she was. She was very, very nice. But it- it was an ordeal along with everything else. You know, it's like I said, an old person, if- if I was the age I am now, I couldn't have gone through all that. I couldn't have. And no older person, I used to say, when I'd fill out all these things, "How can an older person do this?" They can't. So, they got, they didn't get anything. They didn't get a house. And you fight for that, believe me. It didn't come easy. You have to meet with this one and you have to meet with that one and you have meet with him and but luckily, like I said, right after this happened, they had a meeting at the high school, and was a lot of representatives and so a friend of mine and I went and then they talked about another meeting and if you lost your house come to this meeting, so I did. And I can't remember exactly how it happened, but one of the men there was really nice, and you know, he said, "Did you lose your house?" I said, "Yes, I did. It's condemned." He said, "Well, you can get a new one." I said, "Just that easy?" You know, it's not that easy, believe me, but I did get one, and I'm thankful every day I did, but a lot of people now have new homes. So, it's a very good thing.

Butta: Do you think that younger generations are more likely to stay in Crisfield or do you see them moving out?

Ruddy: Moving. There is nothing in Crisfield. There's no work, you know. A lot of them leave. Like my brother, he left. He comes home to visit, and it's home. It'll always be his home. He said that to me one day, "I love Crisfield. It's my home." So that, I was glad to hear that. But he left and went to X-Ray, become an X-Ray tech now. Well, actually, he did MRIs. And then he did. I don't know but he's- he never came back, and he's married, and he lives in Pasadena, which is, I call it, outside of Glen Burnie. Little town like Crisfield, it's near the water. But here, there's nothing.

Butta: Speaking of like the local businesses and jobs, how has that changed since you could remember?

Ruddy: A lot, a lot. We used to have some businesses in Crisfield. We had, don't ask me this, they had several companies, you know. We had Burdell and Company, which turned into Carvel Hall. And that was really busy, really nice, you could. A lot of people went there to work. There was Rubberset, which was a paint company. Sherwin-Williams, they're associated with them. We used to have, it was called Cap Factory. They made hats. There were so many places that you could work when I was young. But now Carvel Hall's closed. All the factories have closed. I

think Rubberset's still is in operation, but not in a big way, a smaller. I think they downsized. They're still in business, but not- not a big business. There's nowhere to work.

Gundlach: How has the seafood industry changed over time, because it is the- the seafood capital of the world?

Ruddy: You'd have to talk to a waterman about that. But it's not like it used to be. It isn't. We used to have really good restaurants that served, I worked in one of them, seafood, Captain's Galley. And we had really good food. I loved working there. That was right on the water, right at the end of the dock, but they closed. All the good restaurants have closed. There's just a couple now and their food isn't like Captain's Galley's food. There was also Watermen's, it was called Watermen's, they've closed. We had a Mexican place, that closed. There's hardly anywhere to go get a good seafood dinner in Crisfield. Sad.

Butta: If you could see in the future businesses being built back up with efforts from the government, what type of businesses would you like to come back to Crisfield?

Ruddy: Some good restaurants that serve good seafood. I have to go up to my brother's to get a good crab cake. And we were known for our crab cakes. Captain's Galley and the crab cake was just about the best. And my mom's, of course. We need some good restaurants. We need some good businesses that will create some jobs for the younger people. That's sad that they have to go elsewhere to work.

Butta: Would you say that the reasonings behind moving is more so because of the job market there or do you think it also has to do with the flooding as well?

Ruddy: Well, I'm sure that doesn't help, but the lack of jobs. I mean, if you graduate, not a lot of them go to college. So, they go elsewhere looking for jobs. And then usually, that's where they stay [pauses]. My older brother, he went to College Park. I don't think he graduated, and he stayed up that way. He got married and stayed up that way. He worked, he worked in Washington, actually, he worked for, he worked in the White House for a while. My older brother. I have a big file of his pictures. I can't remember, was it, which president it was when he was there. But he saved this thing with all these pictures. He didn't work there long, its- I'm sure it's a trying job when you work for the government. But he worked there a good while.

Butta: So, moving on just to- for a few final questions in the last 10 minutes or so that we have. Are you hopeful for the future of Crisfield?

Ruddy: You always have to have hope. Yes, I am. I'm hoping somebody soon will do something. But yes.

Butta: Beyond businesses, where else would you like to see it, like what type of direction would you like to see it heading into in the next 20 years or so?

Ruddy: Lots of good restaurants, lots of good businesses to give the young people jobs [pauses]. Just keep people home, I call it, you know. And the people that come now, they're from cities, they come to get away from that. They do; my girlfriend just had a couple move in right across the street from her. And she was telling me that the house had sold, and this young couple had bought it. And I said, "How in the world did they find Crisfield?" You know, you wonder how do people's, people from cities, end up there? And she said, "Oh, they love it." She- she went over and took them a casserole. And she said, "How on the world did you end up here?" and she said, "Oh, we love it here, we." People have always been there before, like to go out on the boat, you know, they love the water, all that stuff. That brings them there. And then they love it because it's so quiet, you know, and they want to- they move from Washington. So, they think this is heaven, and he- he got a job at Wallops. He's an engineer. So that was neat, because I said this isn't a good time, you know, with the government the way it is to apply to Wallops, but he got it, he got a job, cause that was just a couple of weeks ago. So that's great. So, Wallops is a good lot of people from Crisfield work there. But that's like, that's a ride every day, you know, from Crisfield to Wallops, just like from Crisfield to Salisbury for 31 years. But, hey, it's a job, it's insurance, you meet new people. And your- your co-workers become like family, you know, because you're here more than you're home. So, it's been good for me to work here. It's kept me busy, kept my mind occupied. So, I've loved it here, I can't say that I haven't. And like I said, all my coworkers are family, because I see them more than I do my family.

Gundlach: So how do you think that the City of Crisfield can help like, create these changes, help bring back business and- and restaurants?

Ruddy: That's a good question. I have no idea. I don't know what it would take. I honestly don't. But I don't know that I'll live to see it, cause it's going to take somebody big and mighty to do that. But I'll be there till it does, cause I love it. Like the other night I came home from work, I was so tired and exhausted and threw my shoes off and I went on the porch, which is my saving grace, and looked down at the water and the marsh and I thought, this is a piece of heaven. It surely is.

Butta: I heard that the sunsets are really amazing there.

Ruddy: The most beautiful in the world, and I've not been all over the world, but they are, and I can look right out my window and see them. In fact, I've taken pictures and sent my brother all the time and I'll say, "See what you're missing?" Now, he misses it too. He doesn't tell his wife, but he tells me. He said, "You're right. Crisfield does has the most beautiful sunsets." And it's true because when I look out in the evening from my porch, the colors are so vibrant, like bright orange and pink and blue and you just look and say, "Oh my gosh," you can't paint that even, it's just beautiful. It has the most beautiful sunsets. It's got a lot. If it just didn't have high tides, it would be a perfect place to live.

Gundlach: So, you've kind of been touching on this, but would you recommend Crisfield as it currently is, as a place to live? Say one of us wanted to move there out of college, would you recommend that, or would you caution people?

Ruddy: I would recommend it, but I would also caution you and inform you about the tide and say, "You know, you need boots if you're going to live here. Hip boots, cause that's what I had to get home in after Sandy, clear up to here." But hey, it's all part of life.

Butta: I guess on to our last question. Do you have any other questions that you want to ask? Okay. So, for our last question, what wisdom would you share to future generations?

Ruddy: What? I'm sorry.

Butta: What wisdom would you share to future generations?

Ruddy: What wisdom my, [pauses] I- I don't know. People come to Crisfield because it's- it's a great place to live. There's not a lot of crime. We don't have a whole lot, but we have peace, and we have hope for the future. Hopefully, there'll be jobs sometime. Hopefully, they'll be new restaurants. But it's a quiet, peaceful place that you feel safe. I never felt safe in Baltimore, not once. I was scared to death. I couldn't wait to come back home. It's just, you do, you feel safe. So, I hope that people don't stop coming there and evidently, they've not. They love that, while most people love the water and the peace and the quiet. You can hear the frogs croaking. It's just a good place to live. The people are all so nice. And I will say this if anything happens like, to your family, they're all there. When I lost my mom, you wouldn't believe the flowers, the cards, the food that I received. I couldn't believe it. My house looked like a florist and smelled like one too. It just was amazing. And people bring food. They're just there for you, no matter what. And that's what matters. That's why I love it.

Butta: No, I think that's all. Thank you so much.

Gundlach: Yes, thank you so much.

Ruddy: I'm sorry I'm not a...

[Transcript ends]